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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Position of the European Union for the 15th meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council (Brussels, 29 January 2026)

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Delegations will find attached the European Union's position for the 15th meeting of the EU-Morocco Association Council.

**15TH MEETING OF THE EU-MOROCCO ASSOCIATION COUNCIL**

**(BRUSSELS, 29 JANUARY 2026)**

**Statement by the European Union**

1. The European Union (hereinafter ‘the EU’) welcomes this 15th meeting of the Association Council, which marks the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Association Agreement between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco (hereinafter ‘Morocco’). This meeting provides an opportunity to reaffirm our joint commitment to renewing and reinforcing our partnership in a more ambitious manner, on the basis of the Association Agreement.
2. Morocco is a highly strategic, key partner for the EU in its Southern Neighbourhood, with which the EU shares a rich, multidimensional and privileged relationship. In accordance with the European Council conclusions of 17 October 2024, the EU reaffirms the high value it attaches to its strategic partnership with Morocco and the need to preserve and continue strengthening close relations with Morocco in all areas of the partnership. Accordingly, the EU intends to strengthen this cooperation by adopting the partnership priorities, or an equivalent text, as a framework document for the EU-Morocco partnership. The EU also wishes to intensify regular and structured dialogue with Morocco, including on regional and international issues, making full use of the partnership bodies such as the Association Council, the Association Committee and the sub-committees.
3. The EU notes that the EU-Morocco partnership is a crucial framework for jointly addressing global challenges. In this context, it remains essential that the EU and Morocco reaffirm their shared commitment to a rules-based international order, to effective multilateralism, to the role of the United Nations and its Charter, and to respect for international law, while deepening their cooperation in international and regional fora, particularly in the Euro-Mediterranean area, and with their African partners.
4. As regards the situation in the Middle East, the EU takes note of the European Council conclusions of December 2025 in full and welcomes the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2083 on the establishment of the Board of Peace and of a temporary International Stabilisation Force, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict. The EU calls on all parties to implement the resolution in its entirety, and in line with relevant international political and legal principles. The EU reiterates the need to stabilise the security environment in Gaza, including by ensuring the permanent decommissioning of weapons from Hamas and other non-state armed groups. The EU will continue supporting the Palestinian Authority and its ongoing reform agenda notably through the Palestine Donor Group, with a view to its return to Gaza. The EU highlights the New York Declaration, and reaffirms its strong commitment to international law and to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-state solution in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions where two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders.

The EU notes that its views align with Morocco's, in particular in support of the two-state solution, and praises the organisation by Morocco of the fifth meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, held in Rabat in May 2025, in partnership with the Netherlands. The EU strongly condemns the massive increase in settler violence against Palestinian civilians, including violence against Christian communities, and the policies and threats of forcible displacement and annexation, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The EU also strongly condemns continued terrorist attacks against Israel. The EU stresses the need for the rapid, safe and unimpeded delivery and sustained distribution of humanitarian aid at scale into and throughout Gaza, including via the Cyprus Maritime Corridor to supplement land routes, in accordance with international humanitarian law, and also stresses the need for the UN and its agencies, and humanitarian organisations, to be able to work independently and impartially.

5. Almost four years after Russia began its full-scale, illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a serious violation of international law, including the rules and principles of the United Nations Charter, and is undermining global security and stability and inflicting untold suffering on the people of Ukraine, the EU reaffirms its continued and unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU calls on Morocco to support Ukraine with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law.
6. The EU is committed to making the EU-Morocco partnership a component of regional stability and prosperity for both partners. The EU underlines the potential of regional cooperation to foster growth and prosperity in the Maghreb, in accordance with the objectives of the Pact for the Mediterranean. In this regard, the EU considers that resolving the disputes and tensions in the Maghreb region would be a decisive factor in strengthening this momentum and creating an environment that is conducive to the development of partnerships.
7. The EU reiterates its commitment to the resolution of the dispute in Western Sahara and welcomes the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2797 (2025), which expresses full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy in facilitating and conducting negotiations, taking as a basis Morocco's Autonomy Proposal, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable resolution of the dispute, consistent with the United Nations Charter, and welcomes any constructive suggestions by the parties in response to the Autonomy Proposal, and which calls upon the parties to engage in discussions without preconditions, taking as a basis Morocco's Autonomy Proposal, with a view to achieving a final and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, recognises that genuine autonomy could represent a most feasible outcome and encourages the parties to submit ideas to support a final mutually acceptable solution. In this context, the EU welcomes Morocco's willingness to engage in good faith with all parties concerned in order to clarify the arrangements under this autonomy plan and explain what shape autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty would take. The EU stands ready to assist in facilitating the consultations between the parties within the framework of the United Nations and to support the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy.

8. The EU welcomes the endorsement on 20 November 2025 of a new EU approach in the Sahel, which confirms that disengagement is not an option, proposes a flexible approach tailored to each country, builds on a long-term vision based on mutual interests identified through analysis and dialogue, and encourages a versatile use of the EU toolbox which is firmly rooted in local realities. In this context, the EU is open to exploring and developing synergies with its partners in the region, such as Morocco contributing to the implementation of the new approach in the Sahel.
9. The EU welcomes the Pact for the Mediterranean, launched in Barcelona on 28 November 2025, which reflects the strategic ambition to redefine relations between the EU and its southern partners. By supporting the common Mediterranean area, the Pact aims to create new opportunities for cooperation between the Mediterranean partners, address common challenges and move together towards a partnership based on mutual trust and respect, shared responsibility and collective development. The EU wishes to deepen its cooperation with Morocco, in a spirit of partnership based on mutual trust and shared responsibility, through concrete initiatives and priority actions in areas of common interest, in order to achieve tangible results for citizens of all ages, businesses and entrepreneurs.
10. The EU appreciates Morocco's constructive role in regional cooperation initiatives, including as part of regional platforms where both parties are active participants, such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Anna Lindh Foundation.
11. Morocco remains a key partner and one of the largest recipients of EU financing in the North Africa-Middle East region. The EU's cooperation with Morocco covers a variety of areas that promise inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development and a business climate favourable to investment, fair green and digital transitions and support for human capital development.

### *Democracy, good governance and human rights*

12. The EU emphasises the central importance of the founding and guiding principles of the EU-Morocco partnership and reaffirms its desire to reinforce dialogue and cooperation in the areas of democracy, the rule of law, good governance, justice, responsibility and transparency of institutions, and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the freedom of assembly, the freedom of expression (including that of the press), the freedom of association, the rights of women, children and LGBTI persons, gender equality, as well as the fight against hate speech, intolerance, stigmatisation and discrimination. The EU also emphasises the importance of personal data protection and the right to privacy.

13. The EU reaffirms its conviction that human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the freedom of expression, the freedom of assembly and the freedom of association, as well as the preservation of an open civil society space which enables civil society organisations, human rights defenders, journalists and all actors in public life to take action, constitute essential added value for Morocco and its entire population. The EU wishes to address the many strands of this partnership through strengthened relations with the Moroccan authorities, but also through continuous dialogue with civil society organisations, in particular the non-profit sector, and social partners. The EU will continue to support Morocco in implementing reforms in these areas, including those which promote women's rights.
14. In this regard, the EU attaches particular importance to maintaining regular and in-depth dialogue on human rights, in particular within the relevant subcommittee, which is an essential forum for exchanges, follow-up and strengthening of cooperation.
15. The EU reaffirms its firm and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty under all circumstances and in all cases. The EU welcomes Morocco's decision, for the first time, to vote in favour of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution regarding the moratorium on the use of the death penalty in December 2024, and the resolution of the 60th session of the UN Human Rights Council regarding the death penalty in October 2025. The EU welcomes Morocco's position, which is consistent with its respect for a de facto moratorium on executions since 1993 and encourages it to make progress towards abolition by formalising this moratorium and reducing the offences punishable by the death penalty.
16. The EU congratulates Morocco on the active role in the United Nations Human Rights Council during its third round of participation in the UNHRC's work as a member of the UNHRC for the period 2023-2025. In 2024, the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations in Geneva acted as President, demonstrating Morocco's commitment to multilateral dialogue and the promotion of human rights on the international stage. The EU encourages Morocco to extend this commitment by also continuing in its efforts at national level to promote human rights.

### *Inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development*

17. The Association Agreement<sup>1</sup>, together with Morocco's ambitious business environment reforms, has enabled a rapid upturn in trade between the parties, as well as economic integration and the diversification of exports from Morocco to the EU. The EU highlights the importance of continuing to reinforce trade and investment relations and maintaining open trade between the two parties, as well as respect and support for the multilateral trade framework, in particular within the World Trade Organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kingdom of Morocco, of the other part.

18. The EU reaffirms its conviction that the economic and trade dimension of its relationship with Morocco should be further supported and reinforced, with an approach which is mutually beneficial and consistent with the respective priorities of each party. The EU stresses the need to maintain regular and in-depth dialogue on economic, trade and investment issues, in particular within the institutional framework established by the Association Agreement, to promote the fluidity of the exchange of goods and services and to identify the challenges which could affect bilateral trade as far in advance as possible and tackle them in a pragmatic manner.
19. In order to promote shared prosperity, the EU wishes to reiterate its willingness to engage in in-depth discussions on a broader modernisation of our trade relations in the context of the development of our strategic partnership with Morocco. Modernisation of this kind could be carried out on a flexible and targeted basis, taking a mutually beneficial approach, including by implementing measures to facilitate strategic investment. The EU is also open to proposals from Morocco on possible elements of modernisation to be explored together. The same principle also applies to the joint organisation of the 2030 World Cup by Morocco, Spain and Portugal.
20. At the same time, the EU emphasises its interest in working together with Morocco in key areas of mutual interest with potential for investment and trade, in order to contribute to Morocco's economic integration and sustainable development. In this context, and drawing on its expertise, the EU reaffirms its determination to support Morocco's efforts to roll out strategic infrastructure, in particular in the areas of transport, energy transition and sustainable water management, in partnership with the private sector in Europe and in the framework of the Mohammed VI Investment Fund. The EU welcomes the progress made by Morocco in improving the business and investment climate and encourages Morocco to continue in this positive vein, in particular by means of transparent procedures and administrative simplification.
21. At the socio-economic level, significant challenges remain, in particular as regards employment, especially for women and young people, as well as in reducing territorial and societal disparities. In this context, the cooperation between the EU and Morocco should, as a priority, strengthen the economic competitiveness and diversification of both parties in order to make them more inclusive, resilient and sustainable. The EU welcomes the quality of the partnership in the integration of young people, employment, entrepreneurship and the development of competencies and training, and will continue to support the opportunities available to young people, as well as their socio-economic inclusion. The EU will maintain an integrated approach, mobilising education, professional training, higher education and research and innovation to develop human capital which is adapted to the Moroccan labour market and in line with the aims of the Talent Partnership.
22. As regards social protection, Morocco has continued to make significant efforts to improve the quality of social services and access to them, and to develop protection mechanisms. The EU will continue to support Morocco's social reforms with the aim of social inclusion and access to social services for everyone, including children in vulnerable situations and living in disadvantaged areas.

23. Recognising that the health of the population is a determining factor for productivity, economic competitiveness and sustainable growth, the EU stresses that investment in health is a key lever in the development of human capital and long-term prosperity. In this regard, the EU stresses the importance of strengthening effective, resilient and financially sustainable health systems, with a focus on capabilities in the prevention and detection of and response to communicable diseases, as well as promoting health and quality primary health care, in order to reduce the burden of preventable diseases and the socio-economic impacts thereof. The EU supports Morocco's efforts to guarantee universal, equitable and affordable access to quality health services, thereby contributing to social inclusion, a reduction in inequalities and the improvement of participation in the labour market.
24. The EU welcomes the high quality of customs cooperation established over the years with Morocco. The EU welcomes Morocco's willingness to ratify the revised Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Convention in the near future, which is a symbol of its deeper integration into the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean region.
25. In the agricultural sector, the EU is ready to deepen bilateral relations and resume dialogue on issues of common interest. Enhanced cooperation in the raw materials sector, in particular fertilisers, would help to enhance supply reliability, to promote the development of sustainable and resilient value chains, to reduce the dependence on global markets and to foster greener agriculture in the European Union, while supporting Morocco in its green transition and export objectives. Furthermore, the EU considers that cooperation of this kind could support the transition to more sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural production, in line with the objectives of the green transition and increased exports, both for the EU and Morocco.
26. Aware of present and future challenges, and of the need to create mutually beneficial opportunities, the EU stands ready to work together with Morocco to promote secure and reliable digital infrastructures, to develop the data and artificial intelligence (AI) economy in Morocco, in particular through the deployment of advanced data and computing infrastructures and the creation of AI and digital innovation hubs, and to support the deployment of digital public services and digital public infrastructure solutions that are interoperable with the systems of the EU Member States, in accordance with the International Digital Strategy for the EU and the Digital Morocco 2030 Strategy.
27. The EU welcomes the quality of cooperation with Morocco in the field of transport. The EU welcomes the constructive dialogue at the EU-Morocco Mixed Committee on the Euro-Mediterranean Aviation Agreement held on 12 September 2025.

### *Green partnership and the fight against climate change*

28. The EU welcomes the implementation of the Green Partnership with Morocco, concluded in 2022, which provides a framework for cooperation on climate, environment and energy and promotes the development of the green and blue economy. The EU remains committed to continuing and

deepening its implementation alongside Morocco, in particular through regular engagement in dialogue at the appropriate technical and political level in order to facilitate and strengthen cooperation on these issues in the long term.

29. The EU also stresses that the full success of the Green Partnership is dependent on the mobilisation of the private sector and an adequate regulatory framework, as well as on action by public administrations. The EU considers Morocco to be a strategic partner in the energy transition, particularly in the field of renewable energy. In this context, the EU will aim to promote with Morocco a stable, predictable and transparent investment climate in order to facilitate industrial and technological partnerships between European and Moroccan companies, particularly in the sectors of safe and sustainable low-carbon technologies, including for the production of hydrogen, smart grids, energy storage and energy efficiency.
30. In the field of adaptation to climate change, the EU intends to strengthen its cooperation with Morocco by focusing on the integrated and sustainable management of water resources, the fight against drought and the improvement of climate information and early warning systems with due regard to the current and future impacts of climate change on human health. This commitment will be accompanied by the promotion of sustainable agricultural and forestry practices, nature-based solutions and biodiversity measures to contribute to the prevention, reduction and control of health risks related to climate change. In addition, the EU wishes to deepen cooperation as regards the green and blue economy, including by supporting the development of the circular economy along value chains. The EU also welcomes Morocco's efforts to decarbonise its industries. The EU will aim to further develop dialogue with Morocco on carbon pricing mechanisms, including international transport. The EU is also ready to support Morocco in the development of measures relating to its participation in carbon markets, inter alia through the adoption of a monitoring, reporting and verification system and the development of strategies relating to greenhouse gas reduction trajectories.
31. Through this bilateral cooperation, the EU will act in line and in full conformity with international processes and strengthen its policies and strategies, notably the European Green Deal, the Competitiveness Compass and the Clean Industrial Deal, the success of which also depends on close cooperation with like-minded partners, such as Morocco.
32. Ten years after the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the EU welcomes the fact that this multilateral framework has helped steer the global economy towards a sustainable and resilient transition. However, global climate action needs to be accelerated. It is essential to scale up ambitions, especially among the major emitting countries. The EU welcomes the new NDC 3.0 (Nationally Determined Contribution) and the greater level of ambition compared to the previous NDC. The EU stands ready to support Morocco in the implementation of its NDC 3.0. This cooperation will also help to create new economic opportunities and quality jobs on both sides of the Mediterranean.
33. The EU remains fully committed to the adoption and implementation of the ambitious science-based IMO Net-Zero Framework (International Maritime Organisation). The EU is ready to

engage constructively with Morocco to consolidate the progress made so far in this context and to resume discussions on the Agreement under the auspices of the IMO in due course.

34. The sound management of marine natural resources remains a priority for the EU, including in terms of sustainable, transparent and science-based management. The EU welcomes the quality of fisheries cooperation with Morocco and the preparations under way for the forthcoming opening of negotiations on a new sustainable fisheries partnership agreement.

***Bringing together peoples, young people, research, innovation, education and culture***

35. The EU expresses its intention to further strengthen the strong historical ties between the EU and Morocco, notably in the cultural sectors, in the fields of youth, education, research and innovation, also in relation to the new Pact for the Mediterranean.
36. The EU will continue its efforts to associate Morocco with Community programmes and initiatives. The EU welcomes Morocco's active participation in the international dimension of the Erasmus+ programme, which supports cooperation between Moroccan and European universities, vocational education and training centres, and youth organisations, as well as the mobility of students, teachers and young people. The EU encourages greater participation by Moroccan institutions in the design of projects, in line with the country's national objectives.
37. The EU welcomes the completion on 8 September 2025 of negotiations on Morocco's increased participation in the 'Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area' (PRIMA) programme for the period 2025-2027. The EU considers this step to be an important milestone in strengthening scientific cooperation between Morocco and the EU, and in promoting sustainable development, innovation and regional stability through science diplomacy, joint research and integrated resource management.
38. The EU welcomes Morocco's very significant participation in the Horizon Europe programme, and encourages the strengthening of this participation by research bodies, universities and businesses for the forthcoming 2026-2027 work programmes. Europe remains open to the possibility of resuming and finalising negotiations for association to the Horizon Europe Programme, if conditions allow.
39. As a global public good, culture is an essential pillar of the EU-Morocco partnership and is fully in line with the ambition of the Pact for the Mediterranean. The EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion of shared values, based on respect for diversity, cultural freedom, dialogue and exchange, with a view to strengthening mutual understanding and building with Morocco a dynamic, open and innovative Mediterranean cultural area. Through cultural cooperation, including the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, the EU aims to foster cohesion between societies, empower young people and civil society, and build sustainable bridges.

## *Mobility and migration*

40. The EU reiterates the great importance it attaches to cooperation with Morocco on the management and governance of migration as part of a comprehensive, balanced and mutually beneficial approach in accordance with international law, human rights, the partnership's acquis and shared principles, and the competences of the EU and its Member States. The EU highlights the importance of Morocco's commitment in the area of migration management and governance, and reaffirms its determination to strengthen its cooperation with the Kingdom as part of a comprehensive approach to migration and mobility. The EU encourages the resumption of a regular, frank and open high-level dialogue, also to jointly address complex issues.
41. The EU emphasises that cooperation with Morocco on migration constitutes a solid framework and encourages Morocco to step up this cooperation on the basis of the positive and mutually beneficial experiences already gained. The EU highlights, for instance, progress made as a result of jointly shoring up efforts to prevent irregular immigration – in particular by fighting the smuggling of migrants and people trafficking and by dismantling networks – and as a result of the structured creation of legal pathways for migration and circular mobility in accordance with national competences.
42. The EU emphasises that preventing and combating irregular migration, the security and management of borders, cooperation on returns and readmission, the fight against trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling, and the protection of the people concerned, in particular by means of communication campaigns and raising awareness of risks, all remain shared and essential priorities and responsibilities. The EU also reaffirms its commitment to supporting the implementation of Morocco's National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum (SNIA), and is following with interest developments relating to the adoption of the migration and asylum laws envisaged in that context.
43. The EU places an emphasis on legal mobility under the Talent Partnership, in particular that for professionals practising in shortage sectors, and the structured creation of regular migration pathways in accordance with national competences. The EU recognises the importance of circular migration programmes, especially for students, young workers and young volunteers, paying particular attention to profiles specialising in digital and technological sectors, including through exchange programmes between universities, research centres and technology companies. The EU underlines the importance of promoting fair recruitment practices and enhancing mechanisms for providing information and guidance for migrant workers before they leave so as to guarantee safe and successful mobility, in accordance with national competences.
44. The EU restates the obligation of States to readmit their own citizens and reiterates its willingness to bolster and deepen cooperation at all levels, including on identification, return and readmission, to supplement bilateral cooperation between Morocco and EU Member States.

45. The EU also stresses the importance of strengthening cooperation with the EU agencies on migration and asylum.

*Security, cooperation in the field of justice, prevention of violent extremism and counter-terrorism*

46. The EU and Morocco face common security challenges that require renewed joint commitment and concerted action, in full compliance with democratic principles, human rights and fundamental principles enshrined in international law, including humanitarian law.

47. The EU welcomes the holding of the first High-Level Security Dialogue in Rabat on 8 May 2024, which marked a significant step in strengthening EU-Morocco cooperation in order to discuss security matters of joint interest, and stresses the benefits to be gained from holding such meetings on a regular basis.

48. The EU also expresses its interest in enhancing EU-Morocco cooperation on promoting arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament, and in facilitating inter-regional exchanges between the EU, the Southern Mediterranean region and the African continent on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and export control.

49. The EU promotes a counter-terrorism approach that is based on criminal justice and respects human rights and the rule of law. The EU welcomes Morocco's commitment to the fight against terrorism and the participation and cooperation of Moroccan experts in EU programmes, which enhance exchanges between the EU and its partners on these issues. The EU hopes that this cooperation will continue and grow stronger in the future. The EU also welcomes Morocco's valuable contributions to international counter-terrorism efforts, in particular within the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and its affiliated institutions, including Morocco's active engagement with the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ) and its support for it. The EU hopes in particular that Morocco will be able to support the workshops not only as a participant but also as a trainer, in order to share its experience and expertise in a South-South approach.

50. The EU underlines the importance of the issue of radicalisation, extremist violence, deradicalisation, rehabilitation and social reintegration. The EU welcomes Morocco's efforts, through its specialised institutions, in the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism, as well as cooperation with the EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation. The EU hopes to deepen and broaden this cooperation with several Moroccan institutions within the Knowledge Hub's thematic panels.

51. The EU welcomes the conclusions of the Initiative on Education for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism (Edu4PCVE), co-led with Morocco under the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF). Education is a fundamental tool in preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism. The EU welcomes the next phase of implementation, and invites Morocco to work with the EU on this.
52. The EU would like to point out that judicial cooperation in criminal matters requires a high degree of legal certainty. The EU encourages Morocco to participate in the international multilateral fora set up in the field of mutual legal assistance, in particular that developed by the Council of Europe.
53. In order to respond effectively to common challenges, and as part of the development of the strategic partnership with Morocco, the EU is in favour of reinforcing judicial cooperation at operational level with the EU agencies and bodies. In this context, the EU considers it vital to strengthen judicial cooperation with the EU agencies and bodies at operational level, in particular through an international agreement on judicial cooperation with Eurojust and a working arrangement with the European Public Prosecutor's Office, as well as cooperation on mutual legal assistance and asset recovery, including the freezing and confiscation of the proceeds and instrumentalities of crime. The EU confirms its willingness to share experiences of the legislative framework in the areas of judicial cooperation, justice and data protection more closely. The EU is closely following developments and reforms in the Moroccan legislative framework, which should enable greater operational effectiveness in mutual legal assistance and judicial cooperation, in particular as regards asset recovery, including the freezing and confiscation of proceeds and instruments of crime, as well as the implementation of the relevant international agreements.
54. The EU also stresses the importance of an enhanced dialogue on police cooperation, in particular in the context of enhanced measures to combat transnational organised crime, while respecting each party's legal and institutional frameworks. In this context, the EU encourages the authorities to begin talks with Europol with a view to exploring possible forms of cooperation and to step up their cooperation with the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) and the EU Drugs Agency in the context of the EU4Monitoring Drugs project.

### *Conclusions*

55. The EU reaffirms its fundamental interest in promoting a comprehensive, privileged, ambitious, sustainable and mutually beneficial partnership with Morocco, and its commitment to holding regular dialogue with the Moroccan authorities to address issues of strategic interest to both parties.
56. The Association Council affords an opportunity to concentrate on the future of the partnership between the EU and Morocco, by focusing on the broad areas of mutual interest for the coming years. At bilateral level, the EU intends to highlight the major issues of migration, returns, police and judicial cooperation, the rule of law and human rights, education and research, training,

employment - particularly of young people - and the competitiveness of businesses. Particular attention should be paid to promoting investments, to energy challenges and energy interconnections, to the business climate, to support for European businesses and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as to promoting a safe and reliable digital infrastructure. At global level, the EU wishes, in particular, to strengthen cooperation as regards energy transition and the fight against climate change.

57. This partnership must also contribute to the promotion of an international order that respects the rule of law and human rights. In this context, the EU will remain committed to working alongside Morocco to make the most of the geographical and human proximity that binds them together.